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SUBJECT: IRELAND RESPONSE TO BURMA DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 26677

Classified By: Political/Economic Section Chief Theodore S. Pierce; reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Ireland believes that renewing the EU's Common Position on Burma, due in April, and a strong response from the upcoming GAERC, will be the most effective ways to publicly highlight the flaws in Burma's proposed constitution and referendum, according to Conleth Brady, Deputy Director, Asia and Oceania, Department of Foreign Affairs, to whom POLOFF delivered the reftel demarche on March 20. Ireland is also interested in placing further sanctions on Burma at an EU level, although Brady noted that France has been resistant to any sanctions that would interfere with its trade with Burma. Ireland's own limited trade with Burma makes bi-lateral sanctions ineffective, he added.

¶2. (C) The "roadmap to democracy" and the proposed constitution are both flawed, Brady said, but since they are the only "show in town" it is necessary to try to make them work. The EU is discussing the possibility of using monitors from ASEAN member states to monitor the constitutional referendum vote, he added, but this will work only if the monitors follow the UN standards for monitoring and Burma's democratic and ethnic minority representatives are allowed to participate. Given the poor reception UN Special Advisor Gambari received in Burma, Brady suggested that a stronger UN stance and perhaps a visit from Secretary-General Bi-moon may be needed to get Burma to take the UN's position seriously.

3 (U) Although Ireland does not speak directly with the Burmese government, Brady said, the Irish regularly discuss the situation in Burma with the Chinese, and through the Irish Ambassador to Singapore, with several ASEAN members. Burma is the only Asian country specifically named in the DFA's planning document, he added, highlighting the importance that the Irish place on the situation there.  
FAUCHER